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For Openers

Well, we're on our way.

It is a fact of publishing life that magazines shape their editorial policies to the needs of their advertisers. *High Fidelity* and *Stereo Review* are not really about music, they're about hardware. To the extent that they do deal with music, they deal with music *on records. Down Beat* derives much of its income from instrument manufacturers, and since the best market for such advertisers is [illegible] body of student musicians, *Down Beat* is editorially tilted toward young readers. This is said not in criticism of these magazines — each of them has its function — but as explanation of a lack in publishing. For years, professional musicians and many of my old readers at *High Fidelity* have urged me to start a new publication, one that is for and about jazz, and for that matter for good music in general.

At *High Fidelity,* I was required to write about music as it related to the record industry, although its editor, Leonard Marcus, let me stretch the rule almost to the snapping point. The music that is not on records is often more important than what is. The big story of the last 15 years is the music the major record companies have ruthlessly and shamefully ignored.

Indeed, the major labels have done their best to ruin American music in their obscene pursuit of ever bigger profits. The next-quarter avarice that has done such damage to the American economy — look at Detroit — is nowhere more evident than in the record industry. Jazz has survived in spite of the major labels. Only the small, independent labels in America have served the music and its public. When the major labels have dealt with jazz, they have usually tried to corrupt it: CBS once tried to get Bill Evans to make a rock album. European and Japanese labels, such as Germany's MPS, have shown far more appreciation of jazz than the big American companies. Japanese producers fly to Los Angeles to make albums with American artists that are never released in the United States. (And the Japanese try always to get Japanese pressings rather than American, because the quality of the latter is usually so bad.)

Ken Glancy, the former president of RCA Records and now head of his own jazz label, Finesse — and incidentally, one of the few record executives of recent years to command the respect of the musicians — said once, "Market research in the record business is the worst of any industry I know."

How many jazz fans are there in America? A million? Surely — there may be far more than that in Russia. Ten million? Twenty? The fact is that nobody knows.

It's time we found out. That is one of the primary purposes of the *Jazzletter* — to find the jazz lovers of the world and establish direct contact between them and the artists who have given such enthusiastic support to the *Jazzletter* from the moment of its inception.

Give me books, fruit, French wine and fine weather and a little music out of doors, played by someone I do not know. —John Keats (1795-1821)

Meet Me at Jim & Andy's

When and if, in some far future, a definitive history of jazz is ever written, there will undoubtedly be many mentions of the various record producers and critics who were its champions. It is unlikely that any historian will give an appreciative nod to one James Koulouvaris. Jimmy did nothing but run a bar. But many a great jazz musician remembers that establishment, known as Jim and Andy's, with an almost mystical affection.

Jim and Andy's was one of those New York bars that become centers of an art or an industry. Over on Eighth Avenue, the actors had Downey's. On Sixth Avenue, in an odd little enclave surrounded by Rockefeller Center, there was an Irish bar where the television people hung out. Jazz musicians had Jim and Andy's, located about sixty paces west of Sixth Avenue on 48th Street.

Its entrance was obscured by a flight of steps rising to an adjacent building. It was easy to pass by, particularly at night, for the small pink electric sign in its window, "Jim & Andy," was muted by the more assertive neon voices around it. You descended into Jim and Andy's on a slight ramp with a fall of about a foot. The place had a curious, cave-like sense of safety about it which, for men in an insecure profession, was undoubtedly part of its appeal. The bar was on the right as you entered. A line of booths ran along the left wall, and another line of smaller booths split the place down the middle.

I was introduced to it by Art Farmer. I had just returned from a State Department tour of South America in the summer of 1962, and called Art the minute I hit New York. Art said, "Meet me at Jim and Andy's." "Where's that?" I said. Art told me. Through the remainder of the '60s, Jim and Andy's was for me, as it was for almost every musician I knew, a home-away-from-home, restaurant, watering hole, telephone answering service, informal savings (and loan) bank, and storage place for musical instruments.

It was not uncommon to walk into Jim and Andy's in the late afternoon and encounter Gerry Mulligan, Lalo Schifrin, Alec Wilder, Marion Evans, Mundell Lowe, George Barnes, Carl Kress, Clark Terry, Pat Williams (this was before a record company presented him with roses on the assumption that he was a girl singer, causing him to change it to Patrick), Al Klink, Nick Travis, Willie Dennis, Jo Jones, Coleman Hawkins, Grady Tate, Ben Webster. If you sat there for a while, you'd see Bob Brookmeyer, Doc Severinsen (then only known for being one of the best lead trumpet players in New York), Hank d'Amico, Will Bradley, Budd Johnson, Eddie (Lockjaw) Davis, Phil Woods, Al Cohn, Bill Crow, Milt Hinton, Claus Ogerman, George Duvivier, Willie Rodriguez, Zoot Sims, and Richie Kamuca. Occasionally, Harry Belafonte, Lena Horne, Sarah Vaughan, or Tony Bennett would drift in. Once a certain famous jazz-record producer, noted for his light-fingered way with artists' royalties, came in. Clark Terry muttered, "What's he doing in here? Looking for a friend?"

A postcard-covered bulletin board near the front door kept everyone up to date on friends who were out on the road. The coat closet was always so jammed with instrument cases that nobody was ever able to hang a coat there. The jukebox had probably the best selection of any in the country, but no one ever played it.

Willis Conover, the Voice of America's renowned jazz

broadcaster, said once, "What the Mermaid Tavern was to literature in Elizabethan England, Jim and Andy's is to jazz in America today."

He was not far from the mark. Jim and Andy's — known to its bibulous patrons as "J. and A.'s", "Jim's", and then "the Gym", and finally, by a logical progression, "the Gymnasium" — had all the attributes of a private club, though it had no membership list, no dues, and no rules beyond the requirement that its clients behave themselves, which they did. Indeed, no bar in America could boast a more circumspect clientele.

The proprietor of this curious musical center was the aforementioned Mr. Koulouvaris, an ex-Seabee of Greek extraction who was born about 1920. He had a thick head of dark hair and smooth, dark, Mediterranean skin. He was stocky, with solid shoulders and powerfully muscled arms. He always wore black shoes, shiny old black pants, and a white short-sleeved shirt open at the neck. He was a genuinely tough man, in the most admirable sense of the term.

Jim Koulouvaris operated the Gymnasium at that location from 1956 until, in the late 1960s, the encroaching steel-and-glass towers caused the demolition of that whole colorful block, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, of excellent dusty bookshops, music stores, and small restaurants. Jim had a big heart, a gruff manner, an uncanny instinct about people, a genuine affection for musicians, and a ribald sense of humor. "Jimmy gives something that has almost disappeared from society," Conover said. "Service."

While other taverns were decorated with signs saying "No Checks No Credit", Jimmy accepted checks and extended credit to all his regular customers. He would send each of them a bill at the end of the month. If a musician happened to be going through a period of hardship, the bills mysteriously stopped coming. They resumed when Jimmy knew his man had passed through the doldrums.

In fact, Koulouvaris not only permitted credit to continue when a regular was broke — the plain but excellent food from his small kitchen kept more than one now-famous musician alive during a lean time — he would, as often as not, reach into his own pocket to find the man a little walking-around money. Jim Hall said once, "We can't stop coming here. We all owe Jimmy too much money."

The most astonishing example of Jimmy's generosity — and his faith, if not in the whole human race, at least in his specialized clientele — is recalled by one of the regulars who prefers to remain nameless:

It was on a Monday or Tuesday. The man went in, long in the face. Jim asked, "What's the matter, H------?"

He replied: "My wife's divorce lawyer says if I don't come up with four thousand dollars by Thursday, he'll ruin me completely." Four thousand dollars then equalled twenty or twenty-five today.

"How do you want it?" Jim asked. "In cash, or a check?"

"Jim," the man said,"don't make jokes."

"I'm not joking. Cash? Or a check?"

"Really, Jim", the man said, "I didn't come in here to borrow money."

"Look, H-----, I'm busy! For Christ's sake, do you want cash or a check? I gotta get back to work, and you're holding me up!"

"It'll take me a long time to pay you back."

"Why should we *both* worry?" Jim said.

"Well, okay. Check, I guess. Jesus, Jim, *thank* you."

"Come in Thursday morning at ten," Jim said over his shoulder as he walked back to the bar.

Jimmy claimed that in all the years he ran the place, he was clipped only three times. "The funny thing is that it's been for small amounts each time, twenty or thirty bucks.

"The guys are always good for the money," he said. "They may hold you up for a while, but they always pay in the end. Oh, I've lost out two or three times when guys died. No, I never tried to collect from the estate. Maybe the guy's wife needed the money.

"Musicians are good people. They always pay their debts."

Because of Jimmy's attitude, his patrons felt that their obligations were debts of honor. When a young trumpeter went into the navy, he sent a postcard from Gilbraltar, saying, "Sorry I didn't get a chance to see you before I left. I'm sending you the money I owe next payday. Regards to everybody."

Every so often, someone would wander into Jim and Andy's and ask for Andy. This elicited laughter from the regulars: there was no Andy. In fact, Jim Koulouvaris was not really the Jim of the bar's name. The original Jim and Andy opened the place in 1945. Ten years and a bit later, they decided to get out of the tavern business and Koulouvaris bought it. Thus, when someone asked for Andy, he marked himself as an outsider.

For a while, Jim told everybody that Andy was the cat. "Oh yeah," he said, "we had a cat named Andy. Only one day one of the customers came in and said, 'Hey, Jim, Andy's a lady.' So I [redacted], 'Are you sure?' He just grinned and said, 'That was no cat-fight I saw in the parking lot.'

"A while after that she had kittens, but we still called her Andy."

It was part of the tradition at Jim and Andy's that the customers answer the telephones. There were two telephones in booths at the rear of the place, and they never stopped ringing. Someone would answer, then lean out and yell, "Has anyone seen Jim Hall?" Or they would hang up and tell Jimmy, "If Stan Getz comes in, tell him to call Betsy at Verve Records." Jimmy never wrote any of these messages down, yet he never failed to deliver them.

Jim and Andy's served not only as a social club for its

Music helps not the toothache.
— George Herbert (1593 - 1633)

"members" but as a clearing house for employment. Recording studios all over New York were well aware that the place was always filled with musicians and that those musicians were among the best in the world. (Outside of Los Angeles, there was not, [redacted] is not now, a city in the world with as large a pool of great musicians.) Often, when a producer or arranger needed a bass player or a trumpeter on short notice, he'd bypass the standard hiring procedures and simply call the Gymnasium. Whoever answered the call would bawl out, "Are there any bass players looking for a gig?"

The building next to Jim and Andy's housed A&R, one of the best and busiest recording studios in New York City. Its engineers ran a line down into Jim and Andy's and connected it to a loud speaker on the rear wall. Every so often it would crackle into life and the disembodied voice of engineer Phil Ramone, less famous than he is now, would resound, "Hey, we need a trombone player up here. Is there anybody around?" He might get J.J. Johnson or Willie Dennis or Frank Rehak or Wayne Andre or, if bass trombone was needed, Tony Studd.

What all the Gymnasium regulars did not realize was that this sound system worked two ways. The speaker was over the rearmost booth in the place, the one to which a romantically inclined musician would retreat with a lady, not necessarily his wife. With a flick of a switch, Ramone and the other recording engineers, including Ami Hadani, who now operates TTG Studio in Hollywood, could hear the conversations in which they were engaged. "Sometimes we hear some pretty funny ones," Ramone said.

Funny stories abounded in Jim and Andy's. Some of them sprang from Zoot Sims. Zoot, a man of phenomenal stamina and at that time a heroic capacity for alcohol, usually came in wearing a sweater and looking most casual. One noon he turned up impeccably accoutered in a dark suit, white shirt, and a tie. "Hey, Zoot," someone said, "you're looking mighty dapper today. What happened?"

Zoot looked down the length of his own elegance and said, as if puzzled, "I don't know. I woke up this way."

On another occasion, Zoot turned up the during the morning after having worked until four or five a.m. He'd had no sleep, and he faced a heavy day of recording. Lamenting his condition, he asked if anyone might have a pill to help him through the day. The fiancee of a fellow musician offered him one.

Zoot looked it over on the palm of his hand. "I've never used this kind before," he said. "Is it strong?"

"Sort of," the girl said. "You can take half of it and throw the rest away."

"*What?*" Zoot said in mock indignation. "Throw that good stuff away? Do you realize there are people in Europe *sleeping*?"

On one wall of Jim and Andy's there was a cartoon showing Jimmy answering the telephone and saying, "Zoot who?" On each of the four walls was a sign. One said Jim and Andy's East, the others Jim and Andy's West, North and South. All were on the wrong walls. In the doorway to the small kitchen at the back was a centerfold from *Playboy*. Across the girl's bare bosom, the arranger and composer Gary McFarland had written:

To Gary, dearest:

As you strive to make your way to fame and fortune in Gotham, I hope you won't forget this homely bit of backwoods philosophy: It doesn't matter how you play the game — it's who wins, baby!!!

Love from . . .
Your Mom

There were a few non-musicians who hung around Jim and Andy's. One of them was a loan shark, who never plied his trade there. There were one or two hookers, as well, nor did they ply their profession: they came in there *not* to be bothered, and the musicians accepted them with that tolerance that seems to go with playing jazz. One of them was named Marge. Everyone liked her. She died at 36 of alcoholism.

Still another regular I'll call Buddy Butler. He was getting on in years, had one eye that was rheumy and another that was whitened by a cataract. He was heavy-set and had a somewhat pocked face. Everybody knew Buddy's history. He was a semi-retired thief. His specialty had been shoplifting, or boosting, as he called it. He once showed me the big pockets of a raincoat that had facilitated his activities in department stores. "But I can't do it anymore," he growled in an accent out of Damon Runyan. "Legs are shot." After that he floored me with, "I'm trainin' my daughter in the business."

The staff of Jim and Andy's consisted of Jimmy, Pete Salvato, the pint-sized cook, and Rocky Mareno, a Brooklyn-born bartender whose stub of cigar looked as if it had been welded into his face. Rocky would cuss the customers and they would cuss him back. He had especially insulting names for some of them — his favorites, one suspected. His pet form of address was, "Hey, stiff, what're you drinking?" The first time Rocky would yell to a customer, "Why don't you answer the goddam phone?" the man knew he had become one of the regulars.

All art constantly aspires toward the condition of music. — Walter Pater (1839 - 1894)

When the place got exceptionally busy, Buddy the Booster would get impressed into duty as assistant bartender. Jimmy trusted him with his cash register, and musicians, sometimes with large sums of cash they didn't want to carry in the streets, trusted him with their money. Buddy never stole anything from any of *us*. It would have been unthinkable to him.

Once he acquired some hot radios. He sold two or three of them to musicians. One musician set his on a table in one of the booths and walked away to talk to someone. Buddy said to him, "Hey, somebody's gonna steal that!" The musician gave him a quizzical look that prompted Buddy to shrug and utter a piece of quaint philosophy I've never forgotten: "De second t'ief is de smart t'ief."

For the most part, the musicians were family men. Those who weren't were often on their way to that condition. As often as not, their courtships were conducted in Jim and Andy's, with — no doubt — many of their tenderest sentiments overheard by Phil Ramone from that back booth. On Christmas Eve, the musicians would sing carols. The Christmas Eve of one year found Judy Holliday singing soprano lead and Willis Conover singing basso, with various jazz musicians working on the inner lines. Gerry Mulligan was the conductor.

Jim and Andy's began to be a musician's bar in 1949, more or less by accident. Phil Sapienza, a widely respected repairman of reed instruments, came in one day, bringing with him Paul Ricci, a clarinetist on the staff of NBC, and Irving Horowitz, an English-born player at ABC. They continued to come and brought other musicians. In the middle 1950s, as more and more jazzmen turned to studio jobs, they too discovered the place. By the 1960s, they had begun to feel that they owned it. When Koulouvaris tried to redecorate it, the regulars raised hell. "What are you trying to do?" one of them demanded. "Make the place ritzy?" The pink leatherette seats in the booths were torn and patched, having taken severe and prolonged beating from the instrument cases that musicians would casually sling into them when they arrived. They liked the place as it was.

Jimmy habitually paid off the police. I discovered this when the owner of another musicians' bar was charged with serving a drunk. The charge was ultimately dismissed, but defending himself against it had cost the man thousands and, discouraged, he sold his place. The two vice-squad detectives who had laid the false charge were not reprimanded. I witnessed the shake-down myself, and I discussed it later with Jimmy.

"The damn fool," Jim said. "He should have paid them."

"Do you?" I said.

"Sure. Every bar owner does. They got you surrounded with regulations. If they find too many cigarette butts on the floor in the john, they can get you on a health regulation. It's easier to pay them off."

Jimmy used to close up in July, which disoriented everyone. As one patron said, "My God, I ended up meeting a buddy of mine in a tea room. It was awful."

For countless musicians, the historical events of the 1960s are linked in memory with Jim and Andy's and, faintly, to the flavors of sauteed shrimp and a Greek salad made with feta chese. During the week of the Cuban missile crisis, when people walked through supermarkets almost on tiptoe and we in New York were convinced that we were at Ground Zero on Target Number One, I spent every afternoon in J. and A.'s with Bob Brookmeyer. I remember that we drank, with gallows humor, Moscow mules.

On that ghastly afternoon when John F. Kennedy died. Gary McFarland and I went listlessly up the stairs to A&R Studios, where Woody Herman was recording an album for Phillips. The band was playing *A Taste of Honey*. Everyone had heard the news, and there was in that performance a mournfulness that is not in the arrangement, not in the notes themselves, but in the

attitude of the band. You can hear it on the record. It is a striking track, deeply sad, and it shows how jazz can reflect public events and the consequent moods more immediately than any other art. Woody finished the take and canceled the session, and everyone went back down to Jim and Andy's for a drink before going home to continue the numbing vigil.

But most of the memories of J. and A.'s are happier stuff. Late one afternoon, I was having an early dinner with the superb arranger Marion Evans, disciple of Robert Farnon and teacher of many other arrangers and composers, including Torrie Zito and Pat Williams. A strange looking woman — she somewhat resembled Yvonne DeCarlo in *The Munsters,* except that she wore a wide floppy hat and a loose flower-print blouse — was looking intently at a piece of paper in a nearby booth. At last she rose and came to our booth. "Are you fellows musicians?" she said.

"I guess you might say that," Marion replied in that soft Georgia voice.

She held out a piece of sheet music and pointed to a whole note, second up on the bass clef. "What's this note?" she asked.

Marion said, "Didn't you ever learn *All Cows Eat Grass*?"

"Yes," she said, "but what's this note?"

"Well just think about it," Marion said . "*All Cows Eat Grass.*"

"I *know* that," she said impatiently. "But what's this *note*?"

"It's a cow," I said. I thought Marion would choke.

When he had recovered his composure, he told her the note was a C. She left, satisfied, and Marion crossed his arms at the wrists, fluttered his hands like an ascending bird, and whistled a rising tremolo.

Another time, as we sat at the bar, Marion was telling me about his troubles with the recording engineers at Columbia Records. He had written the charts for an album by Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme. Hearing the mix at home, he went into a slow steam. He took the tape to the chief engineer at Columbia (he always argued that Columbia promoted janitors to engineers) and requested that the man play it. He asked the engineer how many musicians he could hear.

"You could see the wheels turnin' in his head," Marion said. "He knew it was more'n ten an' less'n a hundred. Finally he said, 'About twenty.'

"That's what I hear too," Marion told him. "An' I used thirty-five men on that date. Now I have a certain interest in finance, an' I have worked it out that Columbia Records is wastin' about three million dollars a year on musicians who never get heard."

Jim and Andy's was a Mecca not only for all the musicians of New York, but for those of the west coast as well. Whenever any of the L.A. gang would get into town — Shelly Manne, Johnny Mandel, Jack Sheldon, — they would usually turn up in Jim and Andy's shortly thereafter. The supposed schism between "West Coast Jazz" and "East Coast Jazz" that certain critics tried to foist on the public was not apparent at Jim and Andy's as the regulars greeted some visiting western brother.

There was a joke about a shy west coast jazz musician who arrives at then-Idlewild Airport and tells the cab driver to take him to Jim and Andy's on West 48th Street. The cab driver turns out to be one of your basic New York licensed psychopaths, weaving in and out of the traffic at high speed and pounding over the potholes. Finally, the L.A. cat, squirming in the back seat, says, "Oh man, just play melody!"

Bob Brookmeyer was asked once the question that became anathema to jazz musicians: "Where is jazz going?"

"Down 48th Street to Jim and Andy's," Bob said.

Brookmeyer was the author of another much-quoted line. A rumor swept Jim and Andy's that a certain musician, politely detested by his fellows, had undergone open-heart surgery. Bob said, "What'd they do, take one out or put one in?"

One afternoon another rumor went through the place: that Bill Evans was dead. As far as I knew, Bill was visiting his mother in Florida. I went to a booth and called her number. Bill answered the phone. I yelled from the booth: "Any of you guys want to talk to Bill Evans?" An almost audible wave of relief went through the place.

Now Bill is dead. So too are Alec Wilder, Carl Kress, Willie Rodriguez, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Hank d'Amico, and Richie Kamuca. Judy Holliday, a great actress who was going with Gerry Mulligan and preferred the company of musicians to that of actors, died of cancer. Willie Dennis died in a car crash in, of all places, Central Park. A lot of impromptu wakes were held in Jim and Andy's, all of them quiet and sad. Nick Travis died of a heart attack, one of the finest lead trumpeters on the east coast. A week or so later, on the west coast, another great lead player, Conrad Gozzo, died. A sad little joke went around J. and A.'s. Nick dies and goes to heaven. Gabriel greets him at the gate, his own horn in hand, and says, "Hello, Nick, we've been waiting for you. We're putting together a new band and we want you to play lead." Gabriel takes Nick to a rehearsal. Nick plays thro[illegible]he charts and says, "Hey, Gabe, this is a tough book. I think we'll have to have a split lead." "Who do you want?" Gabriel says. "Gozzo," Nick says. "You got him." Gabriel says.

When Jimmy received notice that the building was to be torn down to make way for the continuing dehumanization of New York, he found a location on West 55th Street. He tried to make it as much like the old place as possible. The seats in the booth were the same pink as the old ones. A brick from the old building was on display in a small glass case, and the old neon sign hung in the window. But it wasn't the same. The new J. and A.'s was too far west and too far north. It was also too close to Eighth Avenue, which had long since gone to seed, and some rough customers began coming in, including a harder kind of hooker. The new place did not have the sense of safety.

And finally, Jim Koulouvaris, who used to come to work at noon and stay until 4 a.m., when he'd start clapping his hands and shouting, "Okay, you guys, everybody out," died of a heart attack. His wife tried to keep the place going with the help of Rocky Mareno, but it couldn't work without Jimmy, and she closed it forever.

Some time after that, Gary McFarland met a friend in a ba[illegible]ne civilian bar, as it were, because there was no Jim and Andy's. A jokester dropped liquid methadone into his drink and he died. If Jim and Andy's hadn't died, I don't think Gary would have either, at least not so young.

Jim and Andy's was hardly Camelot, but for a time there it was indeed a most congenial spot, and an extraordinarily important part of musical Americana.

Perhaps its ultimate tribute came from a musician who, excoriating a certain critic noted for arcane theorizing and impenetrable prose, said, "What the hell would he know about jazz? He never comes into Jim and Andy's."

School Days

Where did the big bands go? Into the schools. In 1960, there were 5,000 "stage" bands in the high schools and universities of the United States, and others in Canada. Today these institutions harbor 30,000 bands and 800,000 student musicians. The National Association of Jazz Educators has over 5,000 members. Other bands are found in private schools such as the Dick Grove Music Workshops in Los Angeles. No one knows how many students are studying jazz privately.